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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the characteristics of elementary school (kindergarten and grades 1-2) teachers of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students and the oral language proficiency of students in the classrooms of identified effective bilingual and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers. The study involved (1) a district-wide survey of parents, teachers, and administrators to identify effective instructional characteristics of bilingual and ESL teachers and (2) measurement of the English and Spanish proficiency levels of students in relation to their participation in effective or very effective classrooms in six schools. Results indicate that while the students made statistically significant gains in two languages, there were no statistically significant gains associated with participation in very effective versus effective classrooms. Possible reasons for these findings are discussed. (Author/MSE)

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Effective Bilingual and ESL Teachers: Characteristics and the Oral Language Proficiency Levels of their Students

Lilliam M. Malave

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EFFECTIVE BILINGUAL AND ESL TEACHERS: CHARACTERISTICS AND THE ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF THEIR STUDENTS

Lilliam M. Malavé

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study that examined the characteristics of early childhood teachers of limited English proficient (LEP) students and the oral language proficiency of students who participated in the classrooms of identified effective bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teachers. It surveyed parents, teachers and administrators to identify effective instruction characteristics of bilingual and ESL teachers of kindergarten, first and second grade LEP children. In addition, it determined the English and Spanish oral language proficiency levels of the students in relation to their participation in effective or very effective classrooms. District wide data were collected about the characteristics of effective bilingual and ESL teachers. Oral language proficiency data were collected from twelve classrooms with K-2 LEP students of six schools in a Western New York urban school district. The results indicate the while the students made statistically significant gains in the two languages, there were no statistically significant gains associated with participation in very effective vs effective classrooms.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine effective instruction characteristics of bilingual and ESL teachers and the level of oral language proficiency of limited-English proficient students participating in the bilingual and ESL classrooms of selected effective teachers. Specifically, the study surveyed parents, teachers and administrators to determine what were the perceived effective instruction characteristics of K-12 teachers of LEP students. In addition, the study identified effective teachers through nominations and classified them as effective or very effective to examine the oral language proficiency level of their students. Two research questions were stated.

Research Questions

1) According to parents, teachers, and administrators; what are the effective instruction characteristics of bilingual and ESL teachers of LEP students ?

2) Is there a significant difference between the oral language performance of LEP students participating in effective classrooms and the performance of those participating in very effective classrooms?

Review of the Literature

During the last two decades much emphasis has been placed in the study of effective schools. Research in bilingual, ESL and early childhood education reflects the evolution of recent findings in the field of effective classroom instruction. The conceptualizations of many studies in effective bilingual- early childhood instruction include frameworks established in the respective fields of second language acquisition, early childhood and effective schools. The literature has demonstrated that effective bilingual and ESL instruction shared many of the characteristics of effective instruction but that at the same time there are characteristics unique to bilingual and ESL instruction (Borich, 1979; Tikunoff, Ward, Lash, Dunbar, & Rounds, 1980). Troisi (1983) cites characteristics of effective teachers related to instruction in bilingual and ESL settings: personal, context related, process oriented, and product specific. Brisk et al. (1990) states that effective bilingual teachers: demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and advocacy, do work that goes beyond teaching, care about their students, have a good understanding of the students background, have high expectations, and focus instruction on learning and on learning a second language. Soto (1990) states that ESL teachers at the elementary level possess collective knowledge and skills or intuition. Additional characteristics of successful bilingual teachers include: using the native language to mediate instruction, creating an environment where students have social contact with native speakers of the other language, using the native language and other transmittals of the native culture, demonstrating high quality of the instructional language, and enriching the nature of the linguistic material from which the child construes English (Fillmore, 1991; Tikunoff et al., 1980; Olesini, 1971; Plante, 1976; Mace-Matluck, 1990). Pease-Alvarez, García, & Espinosa (1991) focuses on the characteristics of effective bilingual early childhood teachers. He states that these teachers: are bilingual-biliterate in the two languages of the child; upgrade their skills continually and serve as mentors to other teachers; are responsive to changes and new developments; use practices that reflect the culture and language of the child; use a holistic approach to teaching; encourage cooperation among students; establish trusting and caring relationships in the classrooms; share a commitment to bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural integration.

Bredekamp (1989) discusses integrated components of developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood. The discussion includes: the use of a curriculum that integrates content learning through projects, learning centers, playful activities, and that reflects the interests of students; an environment for children to learn through active involvement with each other, adults and older children; a classroom that promotes cooperation among children; settings that provide concrete learning materials; adults who promote pro-social behavior, industry and independence by providing stimulating and motivating experiences; a view of parents as educational partners; ability to assess progress through observations and recorded behaviors; availability of classroom space with an adult ratio regulated; and personnel appropriately trained to work with young children.

The study presented in this paper examines to the extent that the characteristics cited in the literature are reflected in the selection of effective bilingual and ESL teachers. It also investigates the oral language performance of limited-English proficient students who participated in selected effective classrooms.

Methodology

Instruments and Procedures

For the first part of the study a questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed to investigate the characteristics of effective teachers of limited-English proficient students. It included three questions used for this study: 1) What is an effective teacher?, 2) Which are the particular characteristics that effective bilingual and/or ESL teachers have?, and 3) Can you identify no more than five very effective k-2 bilingual and/or ESL teachers in your school? (A fourth question for another study was also included.) Thirty-two questionnaires were administered to four groups: 1) eight parents who visited the schools during the two months the data were collected, 2) eight bilingual teachers, 3) eight administrators responsible for ESL and bilingual programs, and 4) eight ESL teachers.

The Language Assessment Scale (LAS), an instrument approved by the NY. State Education Department to identify the oral language proficiency of LEP children, was used to determine the oral language proficiency scores of the students participating in K-2 classrooms where bilingual and ESL teachers had been nominated as effective.

Sample

To identify the sample population it became necessary to follow several steps. First, the pre and post-test scores on the LAS of all the K-2 children in bilingual or ESL programs in the district were identified. The scores of 487 students in 28 self contained classrooms (with 25 bilingual teachers or tutors and 15 ESL teachers) were collected (see Appendix B). Second, since the majority of the students received services from both bilingual and ESL teachers, all the groups (except one) who were serviced only by tutors or one ESL or one bilingual teacher were excluded from the study. Third, since there were no pre-test scores for kindergarten and in addition, some kindergarten groups had no ESL teachers, students in kindergarten were also eliminated for the second part of the study. Fourth, the groups in which the ESL or bilingual teachers were not nominated as effective; i.e., received zero nominations, were eliminated. This process resulted in the selection of six schools to participate in the second part of the study. In these six schools all the LEP students had been pre and post-tested with the English LAS and all were participating in classes with ESL and bilingual teachers nominated as effective (See Table 1).

Table 1

SCHOOL	#STNTS	BIL	NOM	ESL	NOM	T1	T1 MEAN	T2	T2 MEAN	GAIN	MEAN GAIN
SCHOOL BB											
GRADE 1	24	C	3	EC	5	436	18.17	1111	46.29	675	28.13
GRADE 2	17	D	4	EC	5	430	25.30	879	51.70	449	26.41
TOTAL	41					866	16.98	1990	39.02	1124	27.41
SCHOOL CC											
GRADE 1	35	F	1	ED	1	2159	61.69	2598	74.23	439	12.54
GRADE 2	18			EE	1	1293	71.83	1489	82.72	196	10.89
TOTAL	53					3452	65.13	4087	77.11	635	11.98
SCHOOL DD											
GRADE 1	13	I	2	EG	2	693	53.31	919	70.69	226	17.38
GRADE 2	13	J	4	EH	1	667	51.31	1036	79.69	369	28.38
TOTAL	26					1360	52.31	1955	75.19	595	22.88
SCHOOL EE											
GRADE 1	24	M	3	EI	4	1376	57.33	1680	70.00	304	12.67
GRADE 2	13	P	1	EJ	1	903	69.46	1065	81.92	162	12.46
TOTAL	37					2279	61.59	2745	74.19	466	12.59
SCHOOL FF											
GRADE 1	22	R	1	EK	2	728	33.09	1279	58.14	551	25.05
GRADE 2	20	S	3	EK	2	688	34.40	1102	55.10	414	20.70
TOTAL	42					1416	33.71	2381	56.69	965	22.98
SCHOOL HH											
GRADE 1	37	X	4	EN	5	2198	59.41	2756	74.49	558	15.08
GRADE 2	31	Y	3	EO	7	2113	68.16	2428	78.32	315	10.16
TOTAL	68					4311	63.40	5184	76.24	873	12.84

The six schools used in the second part of the study included twelve classrooms (6 first and 6 second grades), 11 bilingual and 10 ESL teachers, and 267 LEP students. Since all but one of the groups received instruction from both a bilingual and an ESL teacher (to have enough second graders one group with only an ESL teacher was included), the groups were ranked according to the number of nominations that the ESL/bilingual team received in the questionnaires. Two categories of effective teachers were also created: effective (4 nominations or less for the team) and very effective (7 to 10 nominations). Two teams of second grade teachers and their students were not used for the purpose of determining the relationship between these two categories and the language proficiency of the children. The two teams eliminated were nominated five times and therefore were considered a midpoint category and could not be placed in either group, effective or very effective (see Table 2).

Table 2

BT/ET	GR	SCH	TOTAL	NOMS # STNTS	PRETEST	POSTTEST	GAIN	MEAN GAIN
				GROUP E				
/EE	2	CC	1	18	1293	1489	196	10.89
F/ED	1	CC	2	35	2159	2598	439	12.54
P/EJ	2b	EE	2	13	903	1065	162	12.46
R/EK	1	FF	3	22	728	1279	551	25.05
I/EG	1	DD	4	13	693	919	226	17.38
				REJECTED				
J/EH	2	DD	5	13	667	1036	369	28.38
S/EK	2	FF	5	20	688	1102	414	20.70
				GROUP VE				
M/EI	1a	EE	7	24	1376	1680	304	12.67
C/EC	1	BB	8	24	436	1111	675	28.13
X/EN	1	HH	9	37	2198	2756	558	15.08
D/EC	2	BB	9	17	430	879	449	26.41
Y/EO	2	HH	10	31	2113	2428	315	10.16

Results

The results were organized to answer the two research questions. The first question addresses the characteristics of effective bilingual and ESL teachers. The questionnaire generated information related to the characteristics of effective teachers in general, and of effective bilingual and ESL teachers in particular. There were two type of responses: professional and personal characteristics. Table 3 illustrates that overall on the professional indicator the respondents answered that an effective teacher must be aware of techniques and strategies of teaching (37.5%). On the personal indicators the respondents emphasized caring about the students (18.75%). The administrators and the bilingual teachers felt that an effective teacher must be aware (50%) and consider (37.5%) the needs of the students, while the parents emphasized knowledge of both languages and motivation (25%).There was more consensus on the perceptions of the ESL teachers than in the perceptions of the other respondents. ESL teachers reflected the results of the overall responses: knowledge of correct strategies (75%) in the professional indicators, and caring about the students (62.5%) in the personal indicator. Administrators indicated that both to be organized (25%) and to care (25%) are important personal characteristics. In addition bilingual teachers also mentioned personal characteristics such as to be sensitive, loving, dedicated, patient, gentle, kind, compassionate, and organized. Parents, like bilingual teachers, added to the personal characteristics to be organized and patient. They also included to have good manners and a good personality, to be aware of the students emotional needs, and to be helpful.

The questionnaire also provided information about the particular characteristics of effective bilingual or ESL teachers. The overall responses on the professional indicator show that awareness of the students cultural background (53.1%) and understanding the children (18.8) were the most frequent responses. When the four groups of respondents were considered individually they also reflected a concern for the cultural background of the students (administrators, 50%; bilingual teachers, 50%; ESL teachers, 75%; parents, 37.5%). In addition, the parents and

the bilingual teachers added language as an important characteristics. On the personal characteristics the overall answers dealt with understanding the children (18.8), with the ESL teachers also reflecting this particular perception (50%). On the personal characteristics the administrators expressed dedication and determination (25%), while bilingual teachers and parents provided 14 different answers. The bilingual teachers, just as the ESL teachers, mentioned understanding the children, and as the parents, they mentioned to be responsible. While bilingual teachers added that effective bilingual and ESL teachers must be respectful, parents added the they must: have good manners and communication skills; be polite, organized, patient and gentle; and like teaching.

The second research question explores the relationship between nomination as effective bilingual and ESL teachers and the oral language proficiency of the limited-English proficient students. To answer this question the oral language proficiency pre and post test (LAS) scores of all the first and second grade LEP in six schools were collected. There were 267 students, 11 bilingual teachers and 10 ESL teachers. Eleven teams of a bilingual and ESL teacher and a one ESL teacher team were ranked according to the number of nominations they received on the questionnaire. The ranking ranges from 1 to 10 nominations. Two categories of effective and very effective teachers were established. Teams with four or less nominations were classified as effective and those with seven or more were classified as very effective. Two teams with five nominations each were not included to establish a clear distinction between the two categories, assuming that a score of five or six represented a midpoint category (see Table 2).

Table 3

EFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ANY TEACHER

FROM:	PROFESSIONAL	% OF ANSWERS	PERSONAL	% OF ANSWERS
ALL QUESTIONNAIRES	Aware of techniques and strategies	37.5	Cares about students	18.75
ADMINISTRATORS	Aware of students needs	50	Organized, Caring	25
BIL TEACHERS	Considers individual needs	37.5	*(8 given)	12.5 ea.
ESL TEACHERS	Select correct strategies	75	Cares about students	82.5
PARENTS	knowledge of both languages/ Motivation	25	**(6 given)	12.5 ea.

*The eight given are sensitive, loving, dedicated, patient, gentle, kind, compassionate, organized
**The six given are organized, good manners, good personality, aware of students' emotional needs, patient, helpful

EFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BIL/ESL TEACHERS

FROM:	PROFESSIONAL	% OF ANSWERS	PERSONAL	% OF ANSWERS
ALL QUESTIONNAIRES	Aware of students cultural background	55.13	Understands children	18.75
ADMINISTRATORS	Aware of cultural background	50	Dedicated/Determination	25
BIL TEACHERS	Understand culture and language	50	*(3 given)	25 ea.
ESL TEACHERS	Culturally sensitive	75	Understand students	50
PARENTS	Understand culture/both languages	37.5	**(11 given)	12.5 ea.

*The three given are understand children, responsible, respectful
**The eleven given are responsible, dynamic, organized, likes teaching, good manners, polite, gentle, good communication with parents good listener, loves children, and patient

Table four illustrates the t-test conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between gains in the pre and post-test scores of each group and the number of nominations teachers received in each group, VE and E. The gains for the groups with very effective (VE) teams of teachers were

found to be significant at p<.01. The gain for the groups with the effective (E) teams of teachers was significant at lower level, p<.02. A Spearman correlation analysis between the number of nominations compared to the total gains of each class was conducted and a moderate positive correlation of .68 was found. However, since group VE had more students than group E, 133 vs 101, further analysis was required to explore the effect of the difference in sample size. A Spearman rho was calculated using the mean gains for each group, rather than raw scores, and the number of nominations for the teams. A very low correlation coefficient of .25 was found. To determine how different the groups were, a t-test for related groups was conducted using mean gains rather than the total gains. No significant difference was found between the means of both groups, VE and E (t=1.66, p< .05). Using an analysis of variance, ANOVA, no significance difference between the two groups (F(1,8)=.28, p<.05). An F-test was calculated and the value obtained (F=1.87, df=4/4) was not equal to or greater than the table F values. It seems that there was no significant difference between mean gains of groups VE and E.

Table 4

t-TEST FOR GROUP VE N= 5 df=4

BT/ET	SCH	TOT NOM	X values	Y values	DIFF	Sq DIFF
M/EI	EE	7	1376.00	1680.00	304	-1376
C/EC	BB	8	436.00	1111.00	675	-436
X/EN	HH	9	2198.00	2756.00	558	-2198
D/EC	BB	9	430.00	879.00	449	-430
Y/EO	HH	10	2113.00	2428.00	315	-2113
		Σ=	6553.00	8854.00	2301	1160231
		MEANS=	1310.60	1770.80	460.20	
		(ΣD)sq =	5294601			
		SLEm=	71.17			
		"t=	6.47			
		t(4), p .01	4.6			

t-TEST FOR GROUP E N= 5 df=4

BT/ET	SCH	TOT NOM	X values	Y values	DIFF	Sq DIFF
EE*	CC	1	1293.00	1489.00	196	38416
F/ED	CC	2	2159.00	2598.00	439	192721
P/EJ	EE	2	903.00	1065.00	162	26244
R/EK	FF	3	728.00	1279.00	551	303601
I/EG	DD	4	693.00	919.00	226	51076
		Σ=	5776.00	7350.00	1574	612058
		MEANS=	1155.20	1470.00	314.80	
		(ΣD)sq=	2477476			
		SLEm=	76.34			
		"t=	4.12			
		t(4),p.01=	4.60			

*ESL TEACHER ONLY
** sigificant at p .01
*** not sigificant at p .01

The data in Table 5 illustrate that in each grade the group of students (teams N/EI and O/EJ) who scored lower(51.66 and 51.38) in the pre-test had higher mean gains (19.90 and 18.05) in the post test. The students (teams M/EI and P/EJ) who scored more in the pre-test (57.33 and 69.46) had fewer mean gains (12.67 and 12.46). Graph 4 illustrates a comparison of the pre-test mean and the mean gain. For example, the team (Y/EO) with the largest number of nominations (10) and the second highest pre-test mean(68.16) have the smallest mean gain (10.16). A Spearman rho correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the mean gain and the pre-test scores. A correlation coefficient of -.95 was found, indicating a strong negative relationship. As the mean pre-test LAS scores went up, the mean gain scores went down. (see Graph 4). Another set of results that support this negative relationship are illustrated in the analysis of the mean gains when the schools are categorized by low or high LAS pre-test mean scores.

Table 5

Grade	Teachers	Noms.	# of Stnts	T1	T1 Mean	T2	T2 Mean	Mean Gain
1	M/EI	32935	24	1376	57.33	1680	70.00	12.67
1	N/EI	0/4	21	1085	51.66	1503	71.57	19.90
2	P/EJ	32873	13	903	69.46	1085	81.92	12.46
2	O/EJ	0/1	21	1079	51.38	1458	69.43	18.05

Graph 4:

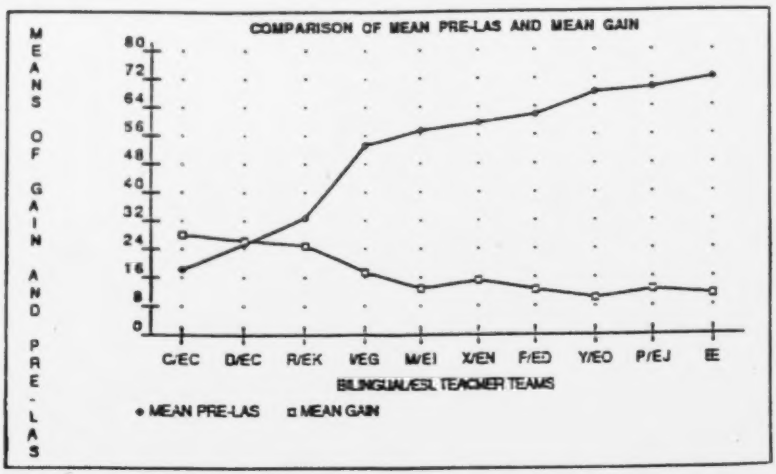


Table 6 illustrates the schools categorized by those in which the mean of the pre-test scores were less than 55 and those in which the means were more than 55. There were the same number of schools (6) and the same number of grades (3 first and 3 second) in each group. A related group t-test was calculated on the dif-

ference between matched pairs of means of the pre-test scores . There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of schools, $t(5)=5.20$, $p < .01$.

Table 6

Group BDF			Group CEH				
School/ Grade	Mean Pretest	% of Gain*	School/ Grade	Mean Pretest	% of Gain*	Difference of Means	Diff. Squared
BB/1	18.17	155%	EE/1	57.33	22%	39.16	1533.51
BB/2	25.30	104%	EE/2	69.46	18%	44.16	1950.11
FF/1	33.09	76%	CC/1	59.41	20%	26.32	692.74
FF/2	34.40	60%	CC/2	68.16	15%	33.76	1139.74
DD/1	53.31	33%	HH/1	61.69	25%	8.38	70.22
DD/2	51.31	55%	HH/2	71.83	15%	18.52	342.99
					Totals	170.30	5729.31

$\Sigma D = 170.30$ $(\Sigma D)^2 = 29002.09$ $\Sigma D^2 = 5729.31$ $\bar{D} = 23.38$

$N = 6$ $df = 5$

$t = 5.20$ $t(5),\ p < .01 = 4.03$

* % over mean pretest score

Another element considered was the comparison of mean grade scores across grade levels. Graph 1 illustrates that grade one students received higher mean gain scores in every school but one (DD). T-tests(see Table 7) indicated that both first and second grades made significant gains ($t(5)=6.63$, $p<.01$ and $t(5)=6.66$, $p<.01$ respectively). A Spearman rho analysis did not show a significant relationship between the number of nominations the teachers received and the mean gains for the grades. Spearman rho of .o4 and .02 for first and second grade respectively were calculated. Graphs 2 and 3 illustrate comparisons of the mean gains per grade in relation to the number of nominations the team of effective teachers received. Since LEP first graders are generally expected to score lower than LEP second graders, the results concur with previous results that indicate that the lower the scores in the LAS the students receive, the higher the mean gains they will obtained.

Graph 1

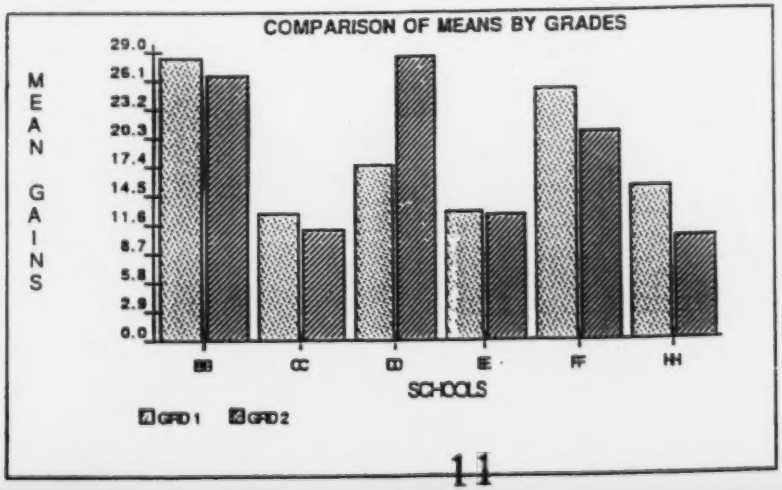


Table 7:

t-TEST FOR FIRST GRADES N= 6 df=5

SCH	BT/ET	BT/NOM	ET/NOM	PRE-LAS	POST-LAS	DIFF	Sq DIFF
BB	C/EC	3	5	436.00	1111.00	675	455625
CC	F/ED	1	1	2159.00	2598.00	439	192721
DD	I/EG	2	2	693.00	919.00	226	51076
EE	M/EI	3	4	1378.00	1680.00	304	92416
FF	R/EK	1	2	728.00	1279.00	551	303601
HH	X/EN	4	5	2196.00	2756.00	558	311364
			Σ=	7590.00	10343.00	2753	1409803
			MEANS=	1265.00	1723.83	458.83	
			(ΣD)sq =	7579009			
			St.Err=	69.19			
			"t=	6.63			
			t(5), p .01=	4.03			

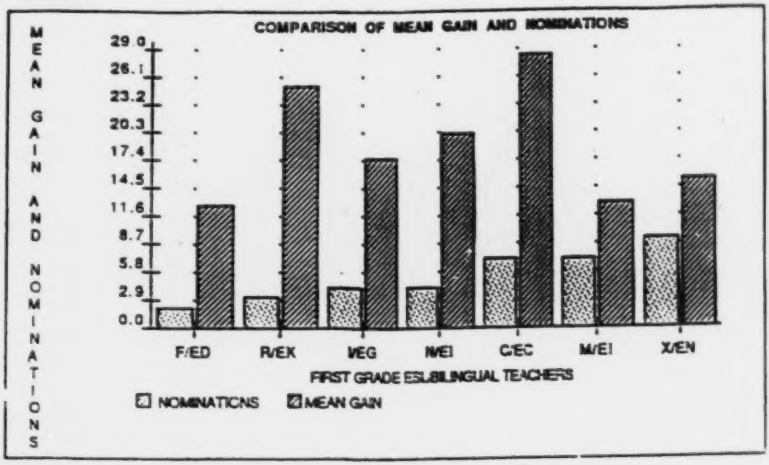
** t value significant at p < .01

t-TEST FOR SECOND GRADES N= 6 df=5

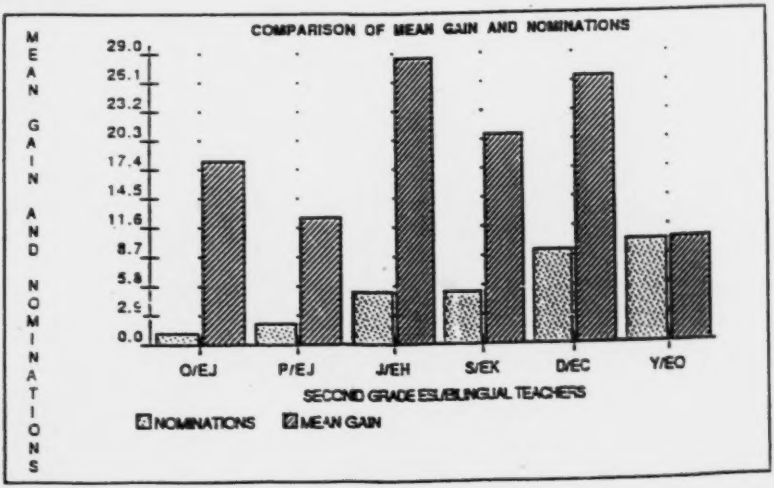
SCH	BT/ET	BT/NOM	ET/NOM	PRE-LAS	POST-LAS	DIFF	Sq DIFF
BB	D/EC	4	5	430.00	879.00	449	201601
CC	/EE*	N/A	1	1293.00	1489.00	196	38416
DD	J/EH	4	1	667.00	1036.00	369	136161
EE	P/EJ	1	1	903.00	1065.00	162	26244
FF	S/EK	3	2	688.00	1102.00	414	171396
HH	Y/EO	3	7	2113.00	2428.00	315	99225
			Σ=	6094.00	7999.00	1905	673043
			MEANS=	1015.67	1333.17	317.50	
			(ΣD)sq=	3629025			
			St.Err=	47.68			
			"t=	6.66			
			t(5), p .01=	4.03			

** t value significant at p < .01

Graph 2



Graph 3



Discussion

Findings

The findings of the first research question indicate that overall the respondents identify that an effective teacher must be aware of instructional techniques and strategies, have knowledge of the needs of the students, and must be motivated. Parents felt that an effective teacher must know English and the native language of the students. The findings indicate that the most unique professional

characteristics of an effective bilingual or ESL teacher are to have knowledge of the students culture and to speak English and the native language of the students. For both teacher categories, effective and effective bilingual and ESL, caring and understanding the children were the most important characteristics.

The findings of the second research question indicate that the students attained significant gains in English oral language performance. Statistically significant correlations were found between the number of nominations and the performance of the students. The more nominations received the stronger the correlation. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the performance of students participating in effective classrooms when compared with students that were participating in very effective classrooms.

The following example presents a possible explanation for the lack of differences between the students participating effective and very effective nominated classrooms. Table 5 illustrates four teams of teachers from the same school (see Appendix B) and the oral language performance of the students. Each team included the same ESL teacher but different bilingual teachers. The ESL teacher of each team was nominated as very effective however, only one of the bilingual teachers in each team was nominated as very effective. M, a first grade bilingual teacher, received 3 nominations and EI, an ESL teacher, received 4, for a total of 7 nominations. Their group's mean gain was 12.67. However, another first grade bilingual teacher, N, received 0 nominations but since EI had 4, their total was 4. Their group's mean gain was 19.90. For second grade, bilingual teacher P had 1 nomination and EJ, an ESL teacher, also had one nomination, for a total of 2. Their students' mean gain was 12.46. EJ's other team member, O, had no nominations. Their students' mean gain was 18.05. In both cases, the students with the team of teachers with fewer nominations had higher mean gains than those with teacher teams with more nominations and vice versa.

The results indicate that there was a negative significant correlation between the pre-test scores and the mean gains. However, the results also concur with the previous findings that in both grades the students made significant gains. It was then speculated that it is possible that the LAS does not measure gains as well for the students at the upper levels as it does for the students of lower level of language proficiency. It is also possible that the students at the lower levels are increasing their scores faster because ESL and bilingual instruction is geared toward their needs at the expense of the more advanced level LEP students. The possibility of a language proficiency plateau must be considered. Student can be reaching a language proficiency level difficult to surpass. As students language proficiency increases measurable gains are more difficult to achieve.

Conclusions and Implication

Many of the effective characteristics cited in literature were not identified by the respondents, although those identified were indeed cited in the literature. For the bilingual and ESL teachers, many of the characteristics cited in the literature were not identified. For example, the use of developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum, materials and techniques were not mentioned. Nor were the use of cultural carriers like stories to transmit cultural information or the use of instructional practices congruent with the cultural background of language minority students (Tikunoff, et al., 1980). No respondent mentioned any of the appropriate instructional practices cited in the literature of young children. No

group of respondent addressed issues such as knowledge of developmentally appropriate curriculum and practices; use of age appropriate material, knowledge of developmental progress of young children; ability to create an environment that encourages active exploration and interaction with others; ability to created student centered learning activities and communication opportunities; ability to relate to the parents and home; knowledge of assessment of young children's progress; is qualified to provide guidance of social-emotional development; and has knowledge of motivation practices for young children (Pease-Alvarez et al., 1991; Bredekamp, 1989; Spodek, 1985).

This study supports the findings of a previous study which concluded that the effective instruction characteristics recognized by those who are directly involved in the implementation of early childhood bilingual and ESL programs do not in general reflect an extensive representation of the literature in effective schools, early childhood or effective bilingual instruction (Malavé, 1992). However, the few characteristics identified have been frequently cited in the literature. Díaz (1985) cites teaching techniques, Brisk et al. (1990) states that good teachers care about their students, Milk (1985; 1990), Oster (1989) and Vázquez (1989) refer to the importance of teachers to be sensitive to the students' needs and Watson, Northcutt & Rydell (1989) discuss organization when they refer to planning instruction. The need to be culturally sensitive has been established by authors such as Saville-Troike (1978), Kendall (1983)and Tikunoff (1981).

Future research needs to examine to the extent to which teachers do exhibit unique effective instruction characteristics impact on the educational performance of limited-English proficient students. There is also a need to investigate what are the unique characteristics of early childhood bilingual and ESL teachers and to what extent these translate into effective instruction which impacts the performance of students.

The results of this investigation also support the finding that LEP students gained mean score points in the oral part of the LAS. In addition, it illustrates that there was a positive relationship between the number of nominations that the effective bilingual and ESL teachers received and the mean gains of the students. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the oral language performance of students in classrooms of teachers categorized as effective vs the students in the classrooms of teachers categorized as very effective.

To explain the above findings several issues were examined. 1)It was speculated that since all the teachers were nominated as effective and the students in both groups attained significant gains, the important factor was to be in an effective classroom regardless if the teachers received many or just a few nominations. 2) It was considered that the process used to select the teachers resulted in the nominations of teachers "perceived as effective" rather than of teachers with " actual measurable degrees of effectiveness". 3) It was speculated that differences in the degrees of effectiveness of teachers' performance are reflected more in areas other than in English oral language. 4) It was also contemplated that ESL teachers could influence more ESL acquisition since the bilingual teacher could impact more other content areas. 5) It was considered that the nomination process does not result in the selection of effective teachers that actually impact their students differently from non-nominated teachers, and 6) It was realized that the categories of effective and very effective teachers could be artificial in relation to measuring the achievement level of the students' oral language performance.

A specific example was used to reinforce the issue of the selection of effective teachers in relation to "perceived" rather than actual "degrees of measurable effectiveness performance" as determined by the oral language mean gains of the students. The illustration brought to light other issues: 1) Does the LAS measure the mean gains of advanced ESL students as accurately as it measures the mean gains of beginning level students? In other words, does this instrument measure gains related to the basic communication skills often emphasized in beginning ESL classes rather than the cognitive and academic skills necessary for content area activities? 2) Are teachers emphasizing instruction for lower level students at the expense of upper level students? 3) Are teachers emphasizing basic communication skills at the expense of cognitive and academic language skills related to advanced ESL test questions?

The findings also demonstrate that there was a strong negative relationship between pre-tests scores and mean gains. The lower the initial scores of the students were, the higher their mean gains resulted. Even when schools were categorized using their low or high initial scores the results were consistent. There were statistically significant differences between the schools with low and those with high mean scores. When the scores were analyzed by grades, while both first and second grade achieved significant gains, grade one obtained higher mean gains. This finding seems consistent with the above finding that a low initial score correlates negatively with high mean gains. LEP first graders generally score lower in language tests than second graders. Therefore, it is consistent with the prior findings that the smaller the pre-test score the larger the gain. Future studies need to control for this factor to examine the impact that other variables such as effectiveness have on language acquisition.

Further research is needed to explain the relationship between leaning a second language and factors such as the ones discussed in this study. Among the ones discussed are: the relation between second language acquisition and teacher's characteristics; the possible effect of a language proficiency plateau; the impact of the initial level of language proficiency on language performance; the validity of language assessment instruments to measure different levels of ESL ; the identification process of effective teachers and the relation of their characteristics to the language performance of the students.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Name: (optional) _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

1. What is an effective teacher?

2. Which are the particular characteristics that every effective Bilingual or ESL teacher should have?

3. Are these the same characteristics the Department of Education consider to evaluate teachers?

4. Can you identify no more than five very effective Bilingual and/or ESL teachers in your school from grades K to 2nd?
(Note) You can name teachers who worked under your supervision last year and no longer work with you.

Bilingual	ESL
A._____	A._____
B._____	B._____
C._____	C._____
D._____	D._____
E._____	E._____

Appendix B

SCHOOLS	STUDENTS	BIL TCHER	BIL NOMS	ESL TCHER	ESL NOMS	T1	T2
SCHOOL AA							
K	21	A	3			1225.50	1478.50
1	21			EA	2	1440.00	1725.00
2	14			EB	2	1080.00	1301.00
TOTAL	56					3745.50	4504.50
SCHOOL BB							
K	10	B	2	EC*	5	258.00	483.00
1	24	C	3	EC*	5	436.00	1111.00
2	17	D	4	EC*	5	430.00	879.00
TOTAL	51					1124.00	2453.00
SCHOOL CC							
K		E	0			***	***
1	35	F	1	ED	1	2159.00	2598.00
2	18			EE	1	1293.00	1489.00
TOTAL	53					3452.00	4087.00
SCHOOL DD							
K		G	0			***	***
K		H	1	EF	1	***	***
1	13	I	2	EG	2	693.00	919.00
2	13	J	4	EH	1	667.00	1036.00
TOTAL	26					1360.00	1955.00
SCHOOL EE							
K-a	13	K	3			347.00	431.00
K-b	24	L	0			692.00	1113.00
SUBTOTAL	37					1039.00	1544.00
1-a	24	M	3	EI*	4	1376.00	1680.00
1-b	21	N	0	EI*	4	1085.00	1503.00
SUBTOTAL	45					2461.00	3183.00
2-a	21	O	0	EJ*	1	1079.00	1458.00
2-b	13	P	1	EJ*	1	903.00	1065.00
SUBTOTAL	34					1982.00	2523.00
SCH. TOTAL	116					5482.00	7250.00
SCHOOL FF							
K	9	Q	1	EK*	2	238.00	519.00
1	22	R	1	EK*	2	728.00	1279.00
2	20	S	3	EK*	2	688.00	1102.00
TOTAL	51					1654.00	2900.00
SCHOOL GG							
LAO	8	T**	1	EL	2	274.00	602.00
VIETNAMESE	16	U**	2	EM	3	155.00	824.00
RUSSIAN	23	V**	0			163.00	1239.00
TOTAL	47					592.00	2665.00
SCHOOL HH							
K	19	W	1			816.00	949.00
1	37	X	4	EN	5	2198.00	2756.00
2	31	Y	3	EO	7	2113.00	2428.00
TOTAL	87					5127.00	6123.00

* taught more than 1 class ** bilingual tutor *** no LAS offered